881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
●582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

585 "The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

595 "Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
596 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[684] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

843 "When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities."
[595]

854 "The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children. While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

647 "Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

622 621 "There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

● 582 "They marry without any visible ceremony and without formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 591 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 684 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

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Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

T 591 also belong to the mother's tribe or clan. Although the Tobas have thus the maternal system of descent, this mother-right, as already pointed out, does not amount to real matriarchy or mother-rule, as among the Choroti.

C 582 As to restrictions in contracting marriage, there seems to exist among most tribes a native law prohibiting unions between very near blood-relations. Among the Choroti, and probably the Ashluslay and Mataco, first cousins are not allowed to marry. The Choroti only gave me the explanation that cousins are alike brother and sister; marriages between them would be looked upon with the same horror as if a brother and a sister married each other. Of the Tobas I was told that they have no objection T 582 to cousins marrying each other. Still, considering the similarity of the social customs and institutions of the Chaco tribes, I doubt whether the same restriction as to cousin-marriage which exists among the lower tribes has not formerly existed among the Tobas also. — Since the families belonging to the same village community are generally closely related to each other, marriages do not as a rule take place between persons of the M 582 621 same village. On the other hand, marriages are generally, although not exclusively, contracted between persons belonging to different village communities of the same sub-tribe. The outer circle within which marriage is allowed is very wide. The Chaco Indians have no objections to marrying women of foreign tribes, and wars are often waged for the very purpose of stealing young women who are afterwards married by the victors.

C M T 586 Divorce occurs in all Chaco tribes, although more frequently among the Tobas than among the primitive Choroti and Mataco. A Toba, Mataco, or Choroti man may leave his wife merely for the sake of marrying a younger and prettier one, since conjugal fidelity is not a prominent virtue of married men in the Chaco. Still, such cases are rather exceptional in Choroti society. The very fewness of the women and the difficulty of getting a new wife instead of the one divorced naturally makes divorce difficult as far as it depends on the man. In all the tribes, on the other hand, a woman may leave her husband if he proves unfaithful, if he treats her badly, or if he is lazy and unable to support her. Of the Toba women particularly I noticed that they left their husbands for very trifling reasons. Unfaithfulness on the part of married women seemed to me to be a common thing among the Tobas, but this may in part be a consequence of the unfavourable influence which the contact with civilization has exerted upon the social morality of these Indians. As for the husband, adultery

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Toba S112

The aversion to eating fish among the Toba women is met with in connection with mourning customs also. As to the ideas underlying this superstition, they will be considered in a later chapter. T 262

The puberty ceremonies of the Bolivian *Mataco* are much the same as those of the Tobas. The first menstruation (*opetetéih* in the Mataco language) is regarded as a critical event which necessitates certain precautions. As is the case among the Tobas, these precautions are more elaborate when the girl is the daughter of a great chief. In that case she is completely isolated for five days, strictly dieting. Every evening drums are beaten outside her hut to keep off the evil spirits, the *aittáh* or *nahút* which are trying to do her harm. As usual, a drinking-feast is arranged for the men. M 881 554 622

If the girl is the daughter of an ordinary man she is allowed to go out, but every evening a dance is held in her honour. This is the ring-dance which the Mataco call *Nahútsak* and which like all Mataco dances is purely ceremonial in its character. The girl sits in the middle of the ring, having the face covered with a cloth, while the other women dance and chant around her in order to keep off the *nahút*. M 881 535

Not only the first menstruation, but similarly the following monthly courses of a woman are regarded by the Mataco as critical in so far as she is then particularly exposed to supernatural dangers. The Mataco woman therefore on these occasions always takes the precaution to restrict her diet, abstaining particularly from eating fish and meat. M 841

There is one more custom which is practised among many Chaco tribes at the time of puberty and therefore may be considered in this connection — the custom of *tattooing*. Tattooing is done by the *Mataco* and the *Chorotí* in about the same way, the women being always and the men sometimes tattooed. The operation is carried out by an old woman: the skin is pricked with a cactus thorn or a sharp bone so that the blood flows, whereupon soot mixed with saliva is carefully rubbed into the wounds. Since the operation is of course extremely painful and makes the girl sick for some days, it is performed gradually, during the course of several years, the intention being that it should be completed when the girl is marriageable. Only the face is tattooed. The first marks are done on the forehead when the girl is about six or seven years old. In the course of the following years new marks — small circles, crosses, half-moons, lines — are added, and when the girl has attained the age of twelve to fourteen years and is considered marriageable, practically the whole face is covered with them. Since the wounds rubbed with ashes cause M 304 M [582]

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Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *caraguatá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *alejo* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *asutaka;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

584 make their appearance, and having studied the chosen cavalier join him in the
836 dance, holding him by the shoulder or around his body (Fig. 2). Either during or
[535] immediately after the dance the girl draws away her elected partner, taking him as a rule to the house of her parents.

302 The introduction to a pre-marital sexual relation can naturally take place in
832 some other manner. It often happens that a young man desiring a sweetheart paints a particular pattern on his face, a large red oval or circle containing small white spots on both cheeks. Everybody then knows that he is seeking a girl, and he is called *kyatikli*. The day after, perhaps even the same day, a girl will be seen painted with the same pattern. She is called *amaklauk*, because by her painting she indicates that she accepts him. This method also shows that it is the girl who
836 makes the choice. He makes himself available both at the nightly dance and by painting himself, and she is free to accept him or to refrain from so doing. I was
[558] assured many times that a young man so selected has no chance of excusing him-
548 self; he would lose face if he attempted to do so, and would call down upon him-
[182] self the anger of the girl's family. A young man who is not chosen by a girl despite his wish can in the meantime console himself with one of the village prostitutes, who appear to have precisely this function, as extra-marital infidelity with a prostitute is regarded as valid unfaithfulness.

301 It has already been mentioned that young men and women seeking love can
832 often be recognised by the painting of their faces and by a general urge to adorn themselves. Also restricted to this period are a special broad armlet made of black and white beads, and—particularly for the girls—an ordinary white string of beads from which depend red woollen cords with bead tassels that hang down the
832 neck (Fig. 1). Young men who seek or have just found a sweetheart, traditionally
[533] evince great musicality, and are practically the only ones who play the Jew's harp
534 and a primitive musical bow. The music gives expression to longing and un-
[304] requited love. Young couples have a special form of caress, pressing the cheek of their partners with the points of their nails. This leaves behind small wounds visible for a week or more, and is proof of great infatuation.

836 When a girl has found a sweetheart no secret is made of the fact; at all events all the young people in the village will be aware of the various short-lived unions that have begun. But when she brings her lover home at night to her parents' house they nevertheless evince a form of discretion. The parents pretend to be asleep whilst the young ones creep in; but the father, as though by chance, may cause the fire to blaze up so that he can see whom the girl has chosen. He then lies down to rest. It is often said of a young couple who in this way commence inti-
583 mate relations that "they have begun to be married". This means that they have
836 commenced a kind of trial marriage the result of which is far from certain. The
[581] girl has primarily chosen her sweetheart on the basis of an undefined mixture of sexual attraction and other propensities, whereas the girl's parents wish to limit
[582] the choice to those economically acceptable. Early the next morning the new

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Fig. 1.—Ready and eager for love this Mataco girl carries the red woollen string with bead-tassels on her back. Phot. Fock.

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son-in-law will be awakened by the girl's father and be given orders to go out and fish or hunt. Should he be unfortunate and return empty-handed, he can count on being sent home to his parents the same afternoon, and the connexion is broken. If, on the other hand, the young man has any luck he is allowed to continue with the girl for the time being. A day or so later he will take her out with him to search for food. He will, for example hunt and look for honey, and she will collect *cavaguatá* leaves. They go a long way, and she tries to fill the *yica*,

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582 583 836 [415] [482] the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [591] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 [579] [684] In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *wikyé*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realized that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco 621 bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle 178 of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, [584] young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during 797 the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

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[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-phot. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the satnáy and sitóy, and consequently the girls from the satnáy preferred to marry men of the sitóy band, and girls of the sitóy men of the satnáy band. The two [622] bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments [611] had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together
591 always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily,
844 as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the
585 advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are
847 considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final
581 test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *enutiha tahnayóy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

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of band exogamy, is the main reason for blood feuds and inter-band warfare. The marriage system thus obtains a far-reaching political influence. Its effectiveness in the case of the Mataco seems far from sufficient, for one thing because no form of extra-marital valve exists. The only thing in this respect is the trial marriage, which is interesting because it clearly discloses the factors that are considered most important in connexion with the creation of a family: first the girl's choice according to inclination and sexual standards, then the sorting done by the couple and the parents on the basis of economic and social position, and, finally, the demand that the union shall be fruitful. Until these three demands are complied with a marriage is not fully recognized by society; should the woman remain childless, it is an acceptable reason for the man to be divorced from her.

Presumably on account of the undefined character of the contract of marriage, no specific wedding ceremony takes place with the Mataco. Family and band solidarity is regarded as so important that the ban on incest and its conventional extension, band exogamy, are considered as measures to counter internal dissension and the forming of cliques. Based on instincts, marriage as an institution can only partially be analysed by an ethnographer, but it seems fair to say that the function of the Mataco marriage, both biologically and culturally, is the creation and maintenance of the family, the greatest possible consideration being shown to the wish of the two parties to preserve the solidarity of the respective bands without thereby upsetting mutual peace. With the Mataco, therefore, marriage, mankind's oldest contract, is not so much a matter of the individual as a family affair.

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